



INSIGHTS

108th Congress

June 9, 2003

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INSIGHTS is prepared expressly for the Department of Energy's Office of Federal Energy Management Programs (FEMP). The purpose of ***INSIGHTS*** is to provide FEMP management staff with timely information on legislative activities relevant to the program. ***INSIGHTS*** is prepared for FEMP by Energetics, Incorporated, (202) 479-2748.

V. HEARINGS SCHEDULE

HOUSE – COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

No hearings of interest to report.

HOUSE – AUTHORIZATIONS/OVERSIGHT

Date/Committee	Chair	Hearing Title/Issues	Witnesses	Time/ Location
June 10 – Committee on Energy and Commerce <i>(NEW)</i>	Billy Tauzin (R/AL)	Hearing – Impact Natural Gas Supply and Demand will have on the domestic economy	Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board	10:00 a.m. Room 2123 Rayburn Office Building

SENATE – COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

No hearings of interest to report.

SENATE – AUTHORIZATIONS/OVERSIGHT

Date/Committee	Chair	Hearing Title/Issues	Witnesses	Time/ Location
June 26 – Committee on Government Affairs <i>(NEW)</i>	Susan Collins (R/ME)	Hearing – To examine the need for Federal real property reform, focusing on deteriorating buildings and wasted opportunities.	TBA	9:30 a.m. Room 342 Dirksen Office Building

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE NEGOTIATIONS/FLOOR VOTES

Date and Action Item	Topic	Location
Week of June 9 – Floor Debate <i>(Ongoing)</i>	<i>S. 14 – Energy Policy Act of 2003</i>	TBA

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I. WEEKLY SUMMARY

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

House

This week, House activities include the following topics of interest:

- Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan is scheduled to testify before the Committee on Energy and Commerce on natural gas supply and demand issues.

Senate

This week, Senate activities include the following topics of interest:

- The Senate resumes consideration of *S. 14 – Energy Policy Act of 2003*.
- The Committee on Government Affairs has scheduled a hearing on Federal real property reform, focusing on deteriorating buildings and wasted opportunities.

Conference Committees/Votes

- *No activities of interest are anticipated.*

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II. COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

FY 2004 APPROPRIATIONS

Funding Levels Negotiations continue between the Administration and the Republican Leadership in the House and Senate for establishing FY 2004 funding levels for the 13 annual appropriations bills. Known as 302(b) allocations, the chairs of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations typically provide each of the 13 subcommittee chairs with funding caps for the mark up process based on the non-binding budget resolution, which provided \$785 billion for FY 2004.

Reportedly, the Congressional plan is to rescind \$3 billion from the FY 2003 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill for war-related activities and redirect those funds to support various defense and domestic programs. Republican Congressional members are expected to meet with the Administration today to settle on a course of action. [If the President approves the proposal, House and Senate appropriators may begin work as early as late this week on the FY 2004 appropriations process.](#)

HOUSE

Hearings

Environmental Protection Agency On June 6, the Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources, and Regulatory Affairs (Committee on Government Reform) held a hearing on two pending bills aimed at elevating the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to cabinet-level status. Witnesses included representatives from various environmental think tanks such as Resources for the Future, the Progressive Policy Institute, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. *H.R. 37*, which was introduced by Sherwood Boehlert (R/NY), would simply redesignate the EPA as the Department of Environmental Protection, while subcommittee chair, Doug Ose's (R/CA) bill, *H.R. 2138*, goes a step further and reorganizes the EPA structure. The new structure would designate a Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and five Assistant Deputy Secretaries, as well as three new Under Secretary positions, including Undersecretary for Science and Information; Under Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Innovation; and Under Secretary for Implementation, Compliance, and Enforcement.

All witnesses supported elevating the EPA to cabinet-level status, noting that both bills would heighten the role of the agency to the American public and the international community. However, some cautioned against changing the agency's existing environmental mandates. The Administration has expressed support for *H.R. 37*, as the simplest approach to expediting EPA to cabinet-level status, which the Administration considers an environmental priority.

Federal Property On June 5, the Committee on Government Reform held a hearing to determine if Federal agencies should be granted more flexibility in managing the 3.2 billion square feet of real estate owned by the Federal Government. Officials from the General Services Administration (GSA), the General Accounting Office, and the Office of Management and Budget testified that agency autonomy in managing property funds would reduce funds wasted on maintaining underused buildings. GSA Administrator Stephen Perry, said the government currently has a \$100 billion backlog in maintenance and repair projects. Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R/VA), said that in order to "stem this tide of deterioration of federal buildings and subsequent waste of taxpayer dollars," the following initiatives could be employed:

- More agencies should be given broader authority to lease or sell property and collect revenue from the transactions.
- Agencies should be provided with incentives to manage property well.
- Money saved by leasing or selling superfluous facilities could go toward repairing heavily used and deteriorating buildings.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which is authorized to lease property and facilities, could be used as a model of property fund management for other Federal agencies. To date, the Department has used the proceeds from the rental of 27 properties to finance the acquisition of a variety of new facilities. The agency's current plan includes the rental of 29 additional facilities to finance the acquisition of new property.

OMB and GAO stressed the importance of maintaining accurate and timely data on Federal agency maintenance backlogs projects. With complete and reliable data, agencies could effectively apply funds derived from the rental or sale of Federal property to the repair of existing facilities.

Legislation

No new actions of interest to report.

SENATE

Hearings

No activities of interest to report.

Legislation

Last week, members resumed consideration of *S. 14 - Energy Policy Act of 2003*, on the Senate floor. Various members introduced amendments related to ethanol and MTBE, which resulted in approval of a provision establishing a Renewable Fuel Standard requiring companies that blend fuels to produce 5 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2012. The Senate is expected to continue to debate *S. 14*, beginning today, June 9. This week's agenda is expected to include debate and vote on provisions and amendments dealing with nuclear energy and the development of oil and gas on Tribal lands.

It is unclear whether the Senate will complete work on the energy bill this week or next. Competing, high-priority issues on the legislative agenda include the FY 2004 appropriations process and medicare.

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III. NEW LEGISLATION

(Note: Once a new bill is introduced, the Government Printing Office generally requires from several days to one week to make the bill available in print)

See detailed provisions for all bills at: thomas.loc.gov

HOUSE

Number	Short title	Date	Sponsor	Status
H.R. 2209	<i>Clean Diesel Act of 2003</i>	5/22/03	John Dingell (D/MI)	Referred to the Committee on Ways & Means
	Requires that diesel fuel sold in U.S. meet specifications designed to facilitate widespread introduction of clean diesel. The standards and requirements apply to any motor vehicle diesel fuel produced or imported by any refiner or importer beginning January 1, 2011. The provisions of this title do not apply to motor vehicle diesel fuel that is designated for export outside the U.S.			

Number	Short title	Date	Sponsor	Status
H.R. 2307	No short title	6/3/03	David Hopson (R/OH)	Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
	Provide for establishment of new Department of Veterans' Affairs medical facilities for veterans in the communities of Columbus, Ohio, and south Texas, for \$90 million..			
H.R. 1849	Reduced Asthma Through Air Quality Improvement Act	4/29/03	Robert Andrews (D/NJ)	Referred to the Subcommittee on Education Reform
	<p>Require the establishment of programs by EPA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and HHS to improve indoor air quality in schools and other buildings.</p> <p>Sec.3 Programs for Providing Information to Schools on Improving Indoor Air Quality – EPA shall enter agreement with nongovernmental organizations to establish a permanent program to provide information to schools on improving indoor air quality.</p> <p>Sec. 4 Building Health Assessment Program – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health shall implement a program to provide building assessments on measures to reduce indoor health risks.</p> <p>Sec. 5 Grants for Improving Indoor Air Quality – HHS shall establish a grant program;</p> <p>(1) Implement EPA recommendations on indoor air quality improvements;</p> <p>(2) Implement Institutes recommendations on building assessment conduct.</p>			
H.R. 2349	No short title	6/5/03	Lane Evans (D/IL)	Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
	<p>Authorize certain major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs.</p> <p>Sec. 1 Authorization of Major Medical Facility Projects -</p> <p>(1) Construction of a new bed tower in Chicago, Illinois , for \$98.5 million.</p> <p>(2) Construction in Clark County, Nevada, for outpatient clinic and office for Veterans Benefits Administration for \$97.3 million.</p> <p>(3) Perform seismic corrections to strengthen Medical Center in San Diego, California , for \$48.6 million.</p> <p>(4) Renovation of inpatient care wards in West Haven, Connecticut, to improve care, safety, privacy, and accessibility. Consolidated medical research at facility for \$50. million.</p>			

SENATE

Number	Short title	Date	Sponsor	Status
S. 1107	<i>Recreational Fee Authority Act of 2003</i>	5/22/03	Craig Thomas (R/WY)	Referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
	For FY 2004, the Secretary of the Interior may establish, modify, charge, and collect fees for admission to National Park System and use of National Park Service administered areas, lands, sites, facilities, and services by individuals and groups.			
S. 1169	<i>No short title</i>	6/3/03	Arlen Specter (R/PA)	Referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
	Decreases U.S. dependence on imported oil by 2015. New regulation sets forth increased fuel economy standards for automobiles. Models after 2006 will be designed to reduce oil used.			

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IV. ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES

Presidential Action Last week, President Bush attended an economic summit of G-8 leaders. The group issued an action plan to protect the environment while growing the economies of each nation. The action plan “builds on U.S. initiatives to develop transformational technologies in three areas: energy, agriculture, and global observation.” In a press release issued by the White House, the Administration outlines the Presidential Action as follows:

The Challenge: Promoting economic growth while securing a better quality of life for people around the world calls for the development and deployment of cleaner and more cost-effective technologies. For instance, next generation energy technologies will be able to provide more reliable energy while dramatically reducing the health burdens of pollution.

G-8 Response: Today, G-8 Partners agreed to Cooperative Action on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, and will:

Develop (1) hydrogen fuel cell technology and infrastructure aimed at making fuel cell vehicles price competitive within two decades, (2) cleaner fossil fuel technologies, including cleaner coal, and (3) new-generation nuclear technologies...

Other U.S. Actions: The U.S. is investing \$1.7 billion in the development of hydrogen fuel cell technology and hydrogen powered “Freedom Car.”

(Source: White House Press Release, June 3, 2003)

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